(where the content (in mole %) represents the content of carboxylic acid and lactone rings, and P represents the viscosity average degree of polymerization of the vinyl alcohol polymer).

6. (Twice amended) A compression-molding binder for ceramics, comprising a vinyl alcohol polymer having an ethylene unit content of 2 to 19 mole %, a polymerization degree of 200 to 2,000, a degree of saponification of 80 to 99.99 mole %, a total content of carboxyl group and lactone rings of 0.02 to 0.4 mole %, wherein the carboxylic acid and lactone ring content in the vinyl alcohol polymer satisfies the following Formula I:

$-1.94 \times 10^{-5} \times P + 0.044 \leqq \text{content} \leqq -1.39 \times 10^{-4} \times P + 0.42$ (I)

(where the content (in mole %) represents the content of carboxylic acid and lactone rings, and P represents the viscosity average degree of polymerization of the vinyl alcohol polymer).

Please cancel Claims 2 and 7.

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DISCUSSION OF THE AMENDMENT

Claims 1 and 6 have each been amended to delete that the vinyl alcohol polymer has no terminal amino group, and by incorporating the subject matter of Claims 2 and 7 therein, respectively. Claims 2 and 7 have been canceled.

No new matter has been added by the above amendment. With entry thereof, Claims 1, 3-6, and 8-20 will be pending in the application.

REMARKS

The rejection of Claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, is respectfully traversed. Indeed, the rejection is now moot in view of the above-discussed amendment. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.